

Rev Mr Litchell

4/13/90

FREE COMMUNION

AN

INNOVATION.

Price SIX - PENCE.

FREE OF UNION



INNOVATION

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FREE COMMUNION

AN

INNOVATION:

OR,

AN ANSWER

TO

MR. JOHN BROWN'S PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

THE HOUSE OF GOD OPENED AND

HIS TABLE FREE, &c.

BY WILLIAM BUTTFIELD. *16*

Charity—rejoiceth in THE TRUTH. I COR. xiii.

*You are never to make Peace with others, at the expence of any Truth
that is revealed by the great GOD; because that is offering up his
Glory in sacrifice to your own.* MR. THOMAS BRADBURY.

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M DCC LXXVIII.

FREE COMMUNICATION

8

INNOVATION

AN ANSWER



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN THE YEAR 1841

BY WILLIAM BULLOCK

Printed by J. G. Smith, at the Press of the House of Commons, St. Martin's Lane, London.

LONDON: Printed by J. G. Smith, at the Press of the House of Commons, St. Martin's Lane, London.

DEDICATION.

To the CHURCH OF CHRIST, assembling at
THORN.

DEAR BRETHREN,

IN the course of last Summer, I delivered a sermon at Ridgmount, from *James* i. 27; the contents of which were highly disapproved by many who attended on that occasion; particularly the arguments that were advanced against Free Communion. The malecontents, not being satisfied with barely signifying their disapprobation, proceeded to indecent freedoms; loading me with reproach, and charging the doctrines that were delivered, with destructive consequences; such consequences, as I cannot but abhor.

UNCONSCIOUS of having advanced any thing indefensible, amidst the tumult and clamour of scandal and defamation, I could not but wish to exculpate myself; for which purpose it seemed needful to publish my discourse. While musing on the propriety of such a step, a pamphlet fell into my hands, written by Mr. BROWN; the design of which is to evince, That Baptists and Pædobaptists may lawfully hold communion together at the Lord's Table.

Having

being more candid, and more extensively charitable than others. That sprinkling, however, or pouring of water upon one part of the body only, cannot be called *Baptism* with the least degree of propriety or truth, we may venture to assert, and shall endeavour to prove, from the authority of God's word. Supposing, though not granting, that the scriptural mode of Baptism cannot be determined by the natural import of the Greek words, *Βαπτω* and *Βαπτίζω*; nor from any circumstances, respecting the persons and places, where those were baptized who submitted to that ordinance in the primitive church; it may be asked, Have we, or have we not, any thing left on record in the New Testament, which may be considered as decisive in this point? To which we may venture to answer in the affirmative; and our authority for it is founded on Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12. This important question, Whether sprinkling be the scriptural mode of Baptism; or, whether, in order to the proper administration of that ordinance, it is necessary the whole body should be buried in water? the apostle determines, in the passages to which I have just referred. In the former of which he says, *We [Christians] are buried with him [Christ] by Baptism*. And in the latter his language is, *Buried with him in Baptism*. Words, surely, cannot be more explicit, or more intelligible. It seems almost impossible, that the impartial reader should mistake the apostle's meaning. We cannot but think, that every unprejudiced inquirer, who has been puzzled with the signification of Greek words, and lost in the wilderness of unmeaning arguments, which have been pressed into the cause of Pædobaptism, may find ample satisfaction respecting the scriptural mode of Baptism, in this apostolic account of it.

These plain, these emphatical passages of the word of God, stand like a wall of brass, in defence of immersion; and bid defiance to the most vigorous, repeated, and united attacks of genius and learning. In vain, then, do our Pædobaptist brethren run round the world in quest of assistance, to evince that the Greek words, *Βαπτω* and *Βαπτίζω*,
not

not only signify to dip, but also to wash, by sprinkling, or pouring of water. In vain are the united authorities of Calvin, Beza, Tilenus, Vossius, Lightfoot, Keckerman, &c. produced for this purpose. In vain is all their analogical reasoning, from the Jewish rites of sprinkling under the law, to prove that sprinkling, or pouring of water upon one part of the body only, is Baptism. If, indeed, the scriptural mode of Baptism is to be determined by the joint authorities of learned men, or the manner of cleansing defiled persons under the law, by sprinkling water upon them; then, to alledge the authority of learned moderns and ancient fathers, and to argue analogically from the Jewish rites of purifying by sprinkling, to prove the propriety of Baptism by asperision, would be of force: but, as Baptism was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, at the commencement of the gospel day; and as the apostle has declared, that believers are *buried* with Christ *by Baptism*; it must be groundless and vain, to produce the authorities of learned men, and to argue analogically from the manner of cleansing defiled persons under the law, by sprinkling, to prove that asperision is Baptism. For, if believers are *buried by Baptism*, then the *burial* of the body must be *essential* to Baptism; and, consequently, *immersion* is essential to that ordinance. And if so, sprinkling has not the essence of Baptism in it; it is a quite different thing; nor can it be called *Baptism*, without a misapplication of terms and an abuse of language. Nor can any of our opponents, that plead for free communion, consider the asperision of infants as having the essence of christian Baptism in it, without exposing themselves to the charge of *Anabaptism*; for it is not uncommon with them, to immerse, on a profession of faith, such as were sprinkled in their infancy.

To the above reflections it may not be improper to add a few remarks on 1 Pet. iii. 21. *The like figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* From this remarkable passage

learn, that the circumstance of *putting away the filth of the flesh*, in Baptism, which, perhaps, is unavoidable, in a greater or less degree, is a matter of no consequence; but that *the answer of a good conscience* is absolutely necessary. By a *good conscience*, we understand, a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ; which, under the influence of grace, induceth a person to do those things which the word of God enjoins, and to omit those which it prohibits. By the *answer* of a good conscience, we understand, actual obedience; or, a practical reply to the commands laid down in the Bible. When convinced by the word of God, that it is our duty to do this, or omit that, our conscience requires obedience; and when, in compliance with what it suggests, under the influence of divine authority, we submit to its dictates, our practice is the language of conscience within; it is *the answer of a good conscience towards God*. Now, if the answer of a good conscience, in the sense explained, be necessary in Baptism, it is impossible that infants should be the proper subjects of that ordinance, for this obvious reason, They are not capable of exercising a conscience in any respect whatever.

Again: If the answer of a good conscience be required in Baptism, and if sprinkling be not Baptism, then adult Pædobaptists cannot exercise a *good conscience* in the service of sprinkling: for that only can be called a *good conscience*, in the sense of this passage, which induceth a christian to act, or refrain from acting, in consequence of being convinced and influenced by the word of God. If, therefore, sprinkling be not Baptism, it is not possible, that a Pædobaptist should be convinced by *the word of God*, that it is his duty to receive sprinkling as the scriptural mode of Baptism. The consequence is unavoidable: Adults, who have submitted to what is called, Baptism by asperision, cannot be considered as baptized; and it must be inconsistent with reason and religion, to admit them into the church, as *baptized* believers. Mr. Brown, however, thinks the

the following reasons, which we proceed to examine,
 “ *sufficiently evince* that the different sentiments of Baptists
 “ and Pædobaptists about water-baptism, should not prevent
 “ mutual love, union, and communion with each other,
 “ in the house of God and at his table.”

“ I. As all, who are called to be saints and faithful in
 “ Christ Jesus, whether they be Baptists or Pædobaptists, are
 “ in the same near relation to God, as their heavenly Father,
 “ and so are brethren—are all equally beloved of him, as
 “ his dear children—born in his house and of his household;
 “ and as he hath promised and gives them all a place and
 “ a name in his house, better than of sons and daughters,
 “ an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off; and also
 “ as, in all places where he records his name, though
 “ only two or three are gathered together, he affords them
 “ his gracious presence and blessing; therefore, as brethren,
 “ it is good and pleasant for them to dwell together in
 “ love and unity, and not to fall out by the way, or attempt
 “ to deprive each other of the common privileges of their
 “ Father’s house, or the means of enjoying his presence,
 “ by shutting the door, and keeping them from his
 “ table.”

A small degree of penetration will enable the reader to discover, that the right of believers to communion at the Lord’s table, is founded on their relation to God, and one to another in Christ, &c. in the above reason. But if believers, according to Mr. B’s. doctrine, have a right to communion at the Lord’s table, because they are related to God, and to each other, in Christ, and because the Lord hath promised to give them a name and a place in his house above †, and actually favours his people with his presence,
 even

† Our Author, by *the house of God*, cannot refer to the Church Militant; for if the Lord hath promised to give ALL his children a place in his house below, then he has conferred privileges on some of his children in the covenant of grace, and promised to bestow those privileges on them in time, which they never

even when two or three only meet together in his name; then, on a supposition that we believe any person to be possessed of the grace of God, whatever his religious sentiments may be, we have no authority to exclude him from the Lord's table. For if a person's relation to God, &c. gives him a right to communion at the Lord's table; then, on our receiving evidence of such relation, we must consider him as possessed of a right to communion, however erroneous his religious sentiments may be. But if we believe that his erroneous sentiments destroy his right to communion, we must also conclude, that they make void his relation to God, and believers in general. For if, according to our Author's sentiments, a person's relation to God, &c. gives him a right to communion; then by a necessary consequence, that which destroys his right to communion, must make void his relation to God, and his title to eternal life. But to suppose, that a real christian's erroneous sentiments vacate his interest in Christ, as a Saviour, and his title to eternal life, is contrary to the word of God; and what Mr. B. himself does not believe. If, therefore, the doctrine here advanced by our Author, be the rule of his conduct; he must permit persons to enter into the church, who are enemies to some capital truths of the gospel. Suppose, for instance, which is sometimes the case, a man to possess the grace of God, who is an avowed enemy to the doctrine of *election*; and who is fond of *propagating* sentiments which are not only opposite to that doctrine, but to others of equal importance: Mr. B. must either receive him, if he desire communion, or be guilty of unlawfully keeping a person out of the church, who, according to his own sentiments, has an indisputable right to a place at the Lord's table.

never enjoy. For though it be the duty of all real converts to seek for communion with a church of Christ, in the order that he has appointed; yet Mr. B. will not deny, that there have been and are believers in the world, who never did, nor ever will enjoy fellowship with the people of God at the Lord's table.

But

But if, to evade these consequences, Mr. B. should say, He does not mean to insinuate, that a person's relation to God, and believers in general, gives him a right to communion at the Lord's table, then his first reason is altogether impertinent; and the charge which he implicitly alleges against those whom he calls "rigid Baptists," of attempting to deprive their brethren of the privileges of their Father's house, and the means of enjoying his presence, by shutting the door, and keeping them from his table, is entirely without foundation.

"II. As they have all obtained the like precious faith, and are called in one body, so are one in Christ, members of his mystical body, in which there should be no schism, even those members which to us seem feeble, unnecessary, less honourable, and unlovely, should not be severed from the body, as useless, or as not belonging to it, but be loved, cared for, and sympathized with: and as the Lord's supper is peculiarly designed to represent this one body, and to promote love and unity in the whole body; as we are all partakers of the one bread in it; therefore none of the members of this one body ought to exclude each other from it, though they may be mistaken in things not essential and which do not affect their moral walk."

After a multitude of unmeaning terms, as used by our Author, grammatically linked together, and a tedious circumlocution without any just argumentation; *out* starts a consequence, which, though foreign to the premises, looks like a fast friend of free communion. Had Mr. B. informed us what he means by *schisms* in the body of Christ, and what by *severing* members from it; and whether or no, he means to charge those who do not admit of free communion, with being guilty of making schisms in, and severing members from that body; it would have been no more than we had a right to expect. But there is too much reason to complain of

of ambiguity in his style ; nor is it uncommon for him to leave us to guess at his real meaning, to the unspeakable disadvantage of incautious readers, who frequently mistake *talking* for *reasoning*.

If by *schism*, in the mystical body of Christ, Mr. B. means an *uncomely disproportion* in any of the members of that body ; which the apostle intends by the term in the passage to which he refers, there cannot be any *schism* thing. For the apostle informs us, 1 Cor. xii. 24, 25, when illustrating the connection and mutual dependence of the members of the mystical body of Christ, and their exact proportion to each other ; by the connection, mutual dependence, and proportion of the members of the human body ; that *God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there should be no schism in the body*. Now, if it be allowed, that the work of God, in forming the mystical body of Christ, is perfect (which cannot with modesty be denied) then it will follow, that there cannot be any schism in that body ; and, consequently, the following words, *In which there should be no schism*, applied to the church of Christ, must be emphatically impertinent. But if *contention* in the church below, be that to which he refers, his assertion is far from being founded in truth. For, as men *naturally* are all enemies to the everlasting gospel, and as the best of them understand it but very imperfectly, offences must and will come in every age ; (the spiritual reign of Christ excepted) until he appears the second time to judge the world in righteousness. To effect the salvation of men, according to the purpose of God, the gospel must be preached : and professors of religion there are, professors of religion there will be, in every age, by whom some branches of revealed truth, will be heartily rejected, until the above-mentioned period arrives. Therefore, as it is absolutely necessary the gospel should be preached, that such persons will be offended is unavoidable ; consequently, offences *must* needs come.

What Mr. B's meaning is, when he says, "Those members, which to us seem feeble, unnecessary, less honourable, and unlovely, should not be severed from the body," may also be thought doubtful. If by severing of members from the mystical body of Christ, he means a *total* exclusion, it is impossible: but if he means formally to exclude them from the church, while in her militant state; it is, in many cases, absolutely necessary, though the excluded parties may be thought to possess the grace of God. And they should be excluded too, not only as *useless*, but as *injurious* to the church; even when they are mistaken only in *some* things that are not essential to salvation, and which do not *visibly* affect their moral walk.

But, lest our remarks on this article should be protracted to an improper length, we conclude, friendly reader, by advertising thee, that there is no real difference between Mr. B's first and second reason, only in the sound and grammatical construction of the words. In his second reason, the right of believers to communion at the Lord's table, is founded on their having obtained like precious faith; and being called in one body, consequently being one in Christ. In his first reason, the right of believers to communion, is founded on their relation to God, and to each other in Christ. Now, Mr. B's design, in his first reason, must be to shew, that a person's right to communion at the Lord's table, depends on his relation to Christ, and to christians in general, without his possessing any evidence of that relation, which seems rather absurd; or there cannot be any real difference between his first and second reason. Because the evidence of a person's relation to Christ, and of being a member of his mystical body, consists in his possessing and exercising the grace of faith: our answer therefore to Mr. B's first reason would not be an impertinent reply to the second.

III. "As Water-baptism in itself, whether it be administered in infancy or when adult, or by the mode of

“ sprinkling, or dipping, makes none a real saint or christ-
 “ tian, or renders any proper subjects for church fellow-
 “ ship : but as those, who are baptized by the one Spirit
 “ in regeneration, are made real saints and christians
 “ thereby, and are all baptized into the one body (the
 “ true mystical church of Christ) and are all made to drink
 “ into one Spirit, and also have truly fellowship with the
 “ Father, Son, and Spirit, and in the gospel ; therefore
 “ such ought not to be refused fellowship with the saints
 “ at the table of the Lord, let their sentiments and prac-
 “ tice about Water-baptism be what they may.”

Is it not highly irrational in Mr. B. to reject Baptism,
 considered as a term of communion, because it is incapable
 of making men christians, or of rendering any one a proper
 subject for church fellowship ? It must, however, be un-
 just to reject Baptism, as a term of communion at the Lord's
 table, merely because in itself it makes none a real saint :
 for, if it is just to reject Baptism as a term of communion,
barely because it hath not the power of making men christ-
 tians ; then practical christianity, in every branch of it,
 may be rejected ; for no one branch of practical religion
 is possessed of such a power.

Mr. B. however, has much the same authority to reject
 Baptism, considered as a term of communion, because it
 hath not the power to make men christians ; as he has to
 assert, that because christians “ Are all baptized by the one
 “ Spirit in regeneration, and are all made to drink into
 “ one Spirit, and also have truly fellowship with the Father,
 “ Son, and Spirit, and in the gospel ; therefore such ought
 “ not to be refused fellowship with the saints at the Lord's
 “ table, let their sentiments about Water-baptism be what
 “ they may.”

In the foregoing remarks we have endeavoured to make it
 appear, that neither a person's relation to God, nor the
 evidence

evidence of that relation, is sufficient, of itself, to entitle him to communion at the Lord's table. Believers, indeed, are baptized by the one Spirit in regeneration, and are made to drink into one Spirit; but their being baptized by the one Spirit in regeneration, is only an evidence to us of their being the adopted sons of God, and no proof that they have a right to communion at the Lord's table. What has been said, therefore, respecting the insufficiency of the evidence of a person's relation to God, to entitle him to christian fellowship at the Lord's table, would sufficiently refute what our Author has here advanced, respecting the right of believers to communion, on account of their having been baptized by, and having drank into, one Spirit.—Mr. B. however, goes farther, and endeavours to strengthen his argument, by subjoining, that believers “have truly fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit, and in the gospel.” But this consideration by no means proves the point in dispute. For communion with God, as enjoyed by christians, is only an evidence of sonship; and a person whose tenets are, in some respects, very erroneous, may be admitted to communion with the Lord. I suppose our author will allow that it may be the case with a Papist.—Further: To suppose, that the enjoyment of communion with God, gives christians a right to communion at the Lord's table; is to conclude, that their *right* to the latter, *commences* upon their possessing the former, and not before. For, if a person's right to communion at the Lord's table, does not commence upon his enjoying fellowship with God; then the enjoyment of communion with God, cannot *entitle* him to a place at the Lord's table. But the *right* of believers to communion, who, under the influence of the Spirit actually eat the sacramental bread, and drink the sacramental wine, is a blessing which was conferred upon them in Christ, before the world began, even when the covenant of grace was ordered in all things, for the elect's sake. Consequently, the enjoyment of communion with God, does not give christians a *right* to communion at his table; and it must be

irrational for them to plead, that they are entitled to it on that account.

But if any one should reply : That which demonstrates a person's *relation* to God, demonstrates also his *right* to communion, and he may be admitted to the Lord's table, on his giving evidence of his relation to Christ. We answer, that which proves a person's relation to God, does not evidence his right to communion ; for if it did, every one who gives evidence of his being a christian, would also give evidence, that he has a right to communion. But this is not the case : for there are some that give evidence of their being christians, who, notwithstanding, live and die without ever approaching the Lord's table. And if it is a new covenant blessing to enjoy communion with God, and with believers at his table (which, I presume, none will deny) we cannot suppose that the Lord in the covenant of grace, bestowed this blessing upon them ; unless to serve a purpose, we are resolved to conclude, contrary to the plainest dictates of common sense (as before observed) that the omniscient God conferred blessings on some of his people, in the covenant of grace, which they never enjoy.

“ IV. As water-baptism is only a figure or shadow, an outward sign, or one leaf of our profession, therefore we ought not to refuse or reject the substance for the sign or shadow ; the kernel for the outward shell ; the fruit, or root of the matter, for a defect in one leaf ; and destroy the peace and edification of brethren who have the blessing and root of the matter in them ; as we know that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, or *water*, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and he that, in these things, serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and should be approved of by us, and not kept out of the house of God, and from his table.”

Such

Such degrading language relating to a positive institution of Christ, is very inconsistent with that profound veneration which Mr. B. professes for the word of God. For, what were all the ancient ceremonies of the Jewish church? What was circumcision? What were sacrifices? Were they not shadows and shells, according to Mr. B's. representation of Baptism? And, on this principle of reasoning, must not the sacred ordinance of the supper be classed with them? If such a way of arguing be admitted, may we not become the humble disciples of GEORGE FOX, and reject both the positive ordinances of the New Testament? for BARCLAY, the Quaker, makes use of similar language, when speaking of the holy supper.

But, to examine this reason, if it may be so called, a little more particularly. Baptism is here represented as a *shadow*, or a *shell*; and a believer is represented as a *substance*, or a *kernel*. Mr. B. having given us this curious representation of Baptism and of believers, concludes, that we, who do not think it our duty to admit Pædobaptists into communion with us, are guilty of the puerile practice of preferring shadows to substances, and shells to kernels. But our author greatly errs, for want of distinguishing between Baptism, considered simply as the appointment of God, and Baptism, as a divine institution, intended to exhibit in a figure, the death, burial, and resurrection of a body. In that view, it is a *substance*; in this, it is a *shadow*: and our Opponent should have remembered, that we contend for the ordinance in the *former* view, as well as the *latter*. The charge, therefore, which is implicitly laid against us, of preferring shadows to substances, and shells to kernels, is ungrounded and vain; except our Author can make it appear, that those venerable and solemn things, DIVINE INSTITUTIONS and DIVINE COMMANDS, may be lawfully considered as *shadows* and *shells*; i. e. as things of little or no importance.

“ V. As water-baptism is an ordinance and personal duty
 “ out of the church, which principally concerns the party
 “ baptized, as to the right and mode of administration;
 “ and as those who are of a different mind are not obliged
 “ to join in, or even be present at, the administration of it,
 “ contrary to their own consciences; but each one, apart
 “ by himself, or with such as are of the same mind, may
 “ strictly discharge what he apprehends his own duty there-
 “ in: Who then art thou that judgest another’s household
 “ servant? (as the original word signifies) For God is his
 “ only master; to him he standeth or falleth, or is ac-
 “ countable for his conduct herein: and, though he may
 “ be mistaken, yet, if the master of the house hath received
 “ him as one of the household, none of the rest of the ser-
 “ vants should judge him, or put a stumbling block, or
 “ occasion to fall in his brother’s way; much less shut
 “ him out of his master’s house, and from his table, which
 “ is an ordinance and social duty, and privilege in the
 “ church, for all his servants, for their edification.”

In vain does Mr. B. endeavour to make the solemn or-
 dinance of Baptism appear little and mean, by asserting,
 that it is a “ personal duty out of the church, which prin-
 “ cipally concerns the party baptized, as to the right and
 “ mode of administration.” For Baptism is not only a per-
 sonal duty out of the church, but it is also the only way in
 which the word of God directs us *into* the church. Or, if
 there be any door of admission into the church for *unbaptized*
 believers, let our Opponent make it appear, and we will
 embrace it, and acknowledge his kindness in the discovery.
 But if there is no other way pointed out in the word of
 God, it must be exceedingly weak for Mr. B. to insinuate,
 that it is the duty of Baptists to receive persons into com-
 munion *merely* on their giving evidence that God has re-
 ceived them; and that, upon refusing them communion at
 the Lord’s table, they become guilty of judging the Lord’s
 household servants, and of a crime, much greater than that

of casting a stumbling-block in their brother's way. With respect to the mistaken notion of a person having a right to communion, who gives evidence that the Lord has received him as his son, it is, we apprehend, refuted in the foregoing pages ; and the effectual refutation of that sentiment, necessarily turns the Author's heavy artillery, which he levels at the enemies of free communion, into *vox & præterea nihil* ; a sound, and nothing else.

One word more, on our Author's inconsistency, and we dismiss this article. Mr. B. virtually allows, that it may be contrary to a Baptist's conscience to join in the service, or to be present with Pædobaptists, when they sprinkle either infants or adults. But if so, Baptists must believe that sprinkling is not Baptism ; for it cannot be contrary to a person's conscience to countenance, by his presence, that which he believes to be right. If, therefore, a person cannot conscientiously countenance sprinkling, he must believe that the manner of applying water by aspersion, is a corruption of the ordinance, and not Baptism itself ; and so it must be contrary to their consciences to receive Pædobaptists into the church as *baptized* persons. Consequently, when Mr. B. pleads for Pædobaptists being admitted into the church, as *baptized* persons ; and yet virtually allows that it may be contrary to the consciences of Baptists, to join in the service, and to be present when any one is sprinkled ; he, in effect, pleads for Baptists, to admit Pædobaptists into their churches, as *baptized* persons, contrary to their consciences.—But of what an untoward constitution must that church be, the members of which are so divided in their sentiments, that they *cannot all unite*, with a good conscience, in the administration of a divine appointment !—so divided, that some consider, as an *appointment of God*, what others treat, as an *invention of men* !—divided to such a degree, that some of them must absent themselves, from what others esteem an act of holy worship ; or else be chargeable, in their own consciences, with countenancing a human

human invention ! What a heterogeneous compound is Mr. B's favourite, *free communion* ! For while it boasts of *uniting* christians at the holy table, it *divides* them at the sacred fount ; though the latter is no less a divine appointment than the former ; and though the members of a christian community should be solicitous to have as much spiritual communion one with another, and as much fellowship with Jesus Christ in the administration of Baptism, as in receiving the holy supper.

“ VI. The time of uniformity amongst the children of
 “ God and servants of Christ, in things not essential to sal-
 “ vation, is not yet come : and till then, it seems, the great
 “ Head of the church is pleased to permit different senti-
 “ ments to take place in non-essentials, for the greater
 “ trial and exercise of true christian charity, long suffering,
 “ and forbearance amongst his people, which an exact
 “ uniformity might prevent ; therefore it should not be in-
 “ sisted on as a term for fellowship in the churches of
 “ Christ.”

That an exact uniformity in non-essentials should not be insisted on as a term of fellowship in the churches of Christ, we cheerfully grant ; but cannot think that *Baptism* is called a non-essential in religion, with any degree of propriety or truth. Baptism is the indispensable duty of all believers ; witness those ever memorable words of our Almighty Redeemer to his disciples, in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* In this emphatical passage of sacred writ, which proceeded from the lips of the Son of man, after he rose from the dead, and is replete with encouragement for those who bear the burden and heat of the day, in the vineyard of the church ; the apostles are commanded, first, to teach ; secondly, to baptize ;

tize; and, thirdly, to inculcate on all those who should receive the truth, the indispensable necessity of observing *all things* that Christ had commanded them. Now, as the apostles were commanded to baptize, and to teach believers to observe *all things* which Christ had commanded them, they were under a divine obligation to urge the observance of Baptism, as an important ordinance, instituted by the Son of God himself. Consequently, Baptism is a positive and indispensable duty. And if so, it must either be the duty of *some* christians in particular, or of *all* in general. If the former, they, doubtless, would have been characterised in the word of God: for, to suppose that Baptism is binding on some christians, and not on others, without a certain and particular description of those who are obliged to conform to this divine institution, is to conclude, that the great God, in omitting to point out those christians on whom Baptism is binding, has rendered it impossible for us to know, with certainty, whether it is our duty to be baptized, or not. But the word of God does not contain any doctrines, precepts, or examples, from which we may justly infer, that Baptism is binding on some christians, and not on others; and yet it is evident, to a demonstration, that Baptism is a positive duty. Consequently, it must be the duty of christians in general. And if Baptism be a duty, and equally binding on christians in general, it cannot be justly called a *non-essential* in religion, nor should it be treated as a matter of indifference; a submission to it being necessary to the discharge of a christian's duty.

But if Mr. B. should say, That he calls Baptism a non-essential, because it is not absolutely *necessary to salvation*; we ask, What is essential to salvation? It is not essential to salvation, for believers to live entirely without sin, while they are in the world; nor, formally and uniformly, to approach the Lord by prayer every day; and yet, to suppose that a person may commit sin, or neglect the important duty of prayer, when it suits his carnal inclination, is a vain and

impious conceit. It is as much the christian's duty to abstain from sin, in every view of it, and to continue instant in prayer, as if the constant discharge of these duties were essentially necessary to the salvation of his soul : for our obligation to the one and the other, does not arise from the *greatness of the effects*, whether good or bad, which are the consequences of doing, or omitting, any thing enjoined ; but from the *authority or right*, which that sovereign Being has to command, whose injunctions we are under. If, therefore, the Lord command me to pick up a pin, it is as much my duty to comply, as it is to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ; because his authority to command is unlimited, and it would be no other than a daring contempt of it, for me to endeavour to excuse myself in neglecting to comply with that injunction, by pleading, that to pick up a pin is not essential to salvation ; and therefore it may be omitted. Let us now apply these reflections.

Baptism is a positive duty, incumbent on christians in general ; the observation of which should be inculcated upon them, under the sanction of the divine command. Therefore, they who can thus plead and act, are evidently partial in their regard to Christ's kingly office : nor is it the least aggravation of their guilt, that they are accessory to the like partiality in others, who cast a slight upon it ; which is unavoidably the case with those Baptists who admit Pædobaptists to communion with them at the Lord's table. And though such Baptists may plead, as they undoubtedly will, that they are influenced by love to their Pædobaptist brethren, and are sincere in their conduct towards them ; yet their love and sincerity are no better than zeal without knowledge ; because they have no authority from the word of God to act such a part. And, if they have no authority from that divine rule to justify their conduct, it is impossible their conduct should be influenced by it. Consequently, however affectionate and sincere they may be, having no guide but their own inclinations, their love must
be

be disorderly. Their sincerity also deserves no better epithet, than that of *sincerity run mad*.

The above remarks may evince the irrationality, not to say the irreligion, of fixing the epithet *non-essential*, to an institution of Jesus Christ. I conceive those things may be called *non-essentials*, and matters of indifference in religion, concerning which we have no command, nor any example, warranted by divine authority; and those only. Among which, I presume, the eating, or not eating, of particular kinds of meat may be classed. For the New Testament does not lay any positive injunctions upon us, relating to that particular. But whatever is commanded, as Baptism is, cannot be an *indifferent* thing. We may therefore conclude, that though the time of uniformity amongst the people of God, and servants of Christ, is not yet come; and an exact uniformity of sentiment, in things not essential, should not be insisted on as a term of communion in the churches of God; yet it is the indispensable duty of the followers of Christ, to plead for Baptism, as a divine institution, and not to slight and treat it, as no essential branch of the religion of Jesus.

“ VII. An uniformity in the mode of water-baptism is
 “ not essential to a true church of Christ, or the foundation
 “ of true christian love amongst brethren: for societies
 “ may be formed on an uniformity in the outward mode
 “ of this ordinance, and yet not be true churches of
 “ Christ, nor have any true christian love subsisting amongst
 “ them: and there certainly are many true churches of
 “ Christ, whose members are knit together in true christian
 “ love, and enjoying the presence of Christ amongst
 “ them, though of different sentiments about the mode of
 “ water-baptism: therefore such a difference should be no
 “ bar to fellowship amongst the churches of Christ.”

If by the words, "a church of Christ," Mr. B. means a company of faithful men, who have first given themselves to the Lord, and to one another according to the will of God, as revealed in the New Testament; then we may venture to assert, That *Baptism*, real Baptism, as appointed by Jesus Christ, is essential, if not to a *true*, yet to an *orderly* church. Nor can any one approach the holy table, in the way of our Lord's appointment, before he is baptized. And whether infant sprinkling be real Baptism, I leave Mr. B. to determine: at the same time reminding him, that if he answer in the affirmative, he is bound, except he choose to be called an *Anabaptist*, never more to immerse, on a profession of faith, any that have been sprinkled in their infancy. And though, with Mr. B. we allow, that an uniformity of sentiment and practice, in regard to Baptism, is not the foundation of true christian love among brethren; yet we maintain, that a want of uniformity in that respect, is a foundation of *contention*: for it is morally impossible that a church should be destitute of such uniformity, without having a foundation of contention laid in its constitution. In vain, then, does our Author plead, that as there certainly are many true churches of Christ, whose members are knit together in love, and enjoying the presence of Christ among them, though of different sentiments about the mode of water-baptism; therefore such a difference should be no bar to fellowship amongst the churches of Christ. For he might as well have said, As it is possible for peace to obtain, where a foundation of contention is laid; therefore, to lay a foundation of contention cannot be improper. That the members of a church *may* possess peace, live together in love, and enjoy the presence of their great Head, though there be not an uniformity of sentiment among them, relating to Baptism, we do not deny; but except Mr. B. can make it appear, that a diversity of opinion and practice, in regard to that ordinance, has a tendency to promote peace among members of the same community; or, at least, that it is not a probable ground of contention

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among

among them; what he here says is little to the purpose. Nay, could our Author make it appear, that the practice of free communion is, in some instances, actually a mean of promoting peace in a congregation of christians, this argument would be invalid; except he could prove, that peace is the *natural effect* of different sentiments in churches, respecting an ordinance of Christ; because Satan himself may be a mean of peace. For, to the honour of our divine Redeemer, we believe that he is able so to counterwork the designs of our common enemy, and so to over-rule the natural tendency of that which is in itself evil, as to subserve his gracious intentions towards his people. But though he can make a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; yet, by the very terms, it appears, that such fruit is not *natural* to it: no, it is the effect of his supernatural and almighty agency. Consequently, they who plant corrupt trees in the garden of God, in expectation that he will make them bring forth a pleasing produce; in other words, they who encourage such a difference of sentiment and practice in a gospel church, relating to an ordinance of divine worship, as has a natural tendency to produce animosities among the members of it, must act a part, the impropriety of which charity herself must condemn.

The *natural effects* of different sentiments in churches, respecting an ordinance of Christ, are *contentions*. And, as a corrupt tree, operating naturally, produces corrupt fruit; so different sentiments in churches, respecting any ordinance whatever, will naturally and unavoidably produce correspondent effects, if those effects be not continually suppressed by the finger of God. Consequently, for Baptists to establish a cause of contention (which, in admitting Pædobaptists to the Lord's table, they cannot avoid) because the Lord can, and does, in some instances, suppress the natural operation of things, must be unlawful; as it is virtually calling for the continual operation of Omnipotence, to suppress those hurtful effects that naturally arise from a cause

of which they are the authors; a cause, which they have the power of removing, and, of course, preventing all bad effects arising from it.

“VIII. The Lord Jesus, as the great and good Shepherd of his flock, the church, hath pronounced, that he who entereth in, by him, as the door, shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. And all the saints and faithful in Christ have thus entered in, and have a right to this promise: therefore all pastors who are after Christ’s heart, should feed them with knowledge and understanding, and not scatter or drive them away, or hinder them from enjoying the sweet and green pastures Christ hath provided for them. Against such, a woe is pronounced, who do scatter and drive them away.”

This argument either proves nothing at all, or it proves too much. If it proves any thing in this dispute, it is, that believers, *as such*, ought to be received into communion at the Lord’s table. For, I suppose, our Author will not deny, that all who have entered in by Christ the door, are true believers, whatever their sentiments or conduct may be. Consequently, a Katabaptist may be admitted to the Lord’s table, if he appear to believe in Jesus Christ; or a converted Papist, who refuses the wine at the holy supper. If Mr. B. abide by this argument, his communion will be *free indeed*—Free, for Quakers, for Papists, for whomsoever will, provided they appear to him to believe in Jesus, or to have entered in by Christ the door. Nor must he forget the *woe*, of which he has reminded us, and to which he will subject himself, if he refuse communion to them.

“IX. The new royal law of the King of saints is, That they love one another as he hath loved them; that they also love one another: and it is the distinguishing character by which we may not only know, but all men may know, we are his disciples, if we have
“love

“love one to another. Love, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. As, therefore, the many weaknesses and mistakes of his people did not, nor do now, hinder his love and presence with them, neither should they hinder us from loving and walking in love with them. But how contrary is it to our duty to shut them out of his house and from his table?”

To expose the futility of this argument, I would observe, That one command of God cannot require the sacrifice of another, in order to a compliance with it. For, to suppose that one divine command requires the breach of another, in order to a performance of it; is to imagine, that the great God has laid a snare for the souls of men. Therefore, if we would not blaspheme our Maker, we must never imagine that a firm adherence to one command can be esteemed the breach of another. Now, Baptism, by immersion, is an ordinance of God, and a submission to it is required of all believers, previous to their enjoying communion at the Lord's table; which we hope hereafter more fully to shew.

But, according to Mr. B's mode of reasoning, a compliance with the royal law of the King of saints, requires the sacrifice of this institution. Consequently, for the reason assigned above, his notions of a compliance with that royal law, must be extravagant. Baptism, therefore, being an ordinance of Christ, to which it is the duty of believers to submit, prior to their enjoying communion at his table; it is impossible the Baptists should be guilty of breaking the royal law, or of abridging their power to perform any thing which that law enjoins, in refusing to admit those into the church, who are unwilling to comply with that which, according to the word of God, is a pre-requisite to it. Therefore, to represent Baptists as rigid, censorious bigots; and

and to charge them with breaking the royal law of the King of saints, *merely* because they refuse to receive Pædo-baptists to fellowship with them at the Lord's table, is a conduct entirely inconsistent with the laws of heaven in general, and justly merits the severest censure. We sincerely wish that such prodigies of candour and charity, as Mr. B. would first rectify what is amiss in themselves; by scouring off the rust of censoriousness and bigotry, which cleaves closely to them. It may not be improper for them to ask, Whether those branches of their own conduct, by which they aim to discover their candour and extensive charity, are not the effect of a prevailing passion to please men, rather than of a fervent and sincere desire to glorify God, by acting continually under the influence of his authority? We hope also, it will not be unreasonable to observe, that though we would not wish our opponents to refrain from doing any thing that may recommend the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet, so far as they, by their candid and charitable mode of proceeding, render it agreeable to the carnal appetites and maxims of men; *so far* they are guilty of marring, instead of recommending it. And whether any one will receive the thanks of the great Head of the church, for such a conduct, in the last day, we leave our opponents themselves to determine.—Before I dismiss this argument, I would observe, that it labours under the same defect with that which immediately precedes, and might have been answered in the same way.

“ X. The apostolic rules are, for us to receive the weak
 “ in faith; to bear their infirmities; to receive one an-
 “ other, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God:
 “ rules enforced by the example of Christ, who receives the
 “ weak as well as the strong, and bears with the infirmities
 “ of his people and churches: the bruised reed he did
 “ not break, and smoking flax he did not quench. Though
 “ he had many things against the Asiatic churches, yet he
 “ owned them as his, and walked in the midst of them;
 and

“ and he still does with all such as hold him as their Head,
“ the fundamental doctrines of christianity, the ordinances
“ in substance, and whose conversations are according to
“ godliness, though there may be many weaknesses and
“ mistakes amongst them : the thought of which should
“ allay a bigoted party spirit among real christians, and
“ engage them to walk together with all lowliness and
“ meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another
“ in love.”

It is well known, that the great apostle discourses about things indifferent, from the beginning of the xivth to the 7th verse of the xvth of Romans ; and that his design is to shew, the obligation which christians of superior knowledge in divine things are under, to bear with the infirmities of the weak, in things that are indifferent, concerning which there is no positive command in the word of God. Of this, I should think Mr. B. must be convinced. He cannot but know also, that Baptism is a positive duty ; for the proof of which we need only consult his preliminary remarks. Now, is it not very extraordinary, that he should think those instructions which the apostle gave to believers, respecting their behaviour towards weak brethren, who made conscience of complying, or of refusing to comply, with things purely indifferent, are properly alledged ; not only to prove that it is lawful, but laudable, for believers to dispense, or to countenance others in dispensing, with a positive duty ? If he does not think they are properly alledged for this purpose, he was guilty of the most egregious trifling, in quoting and thus applying those instructions †. And if he does consider them as pertinent, then he must believe, that those instructions, which are proper in matters indifferent, are quite sufficient also, in things of importance ; which is no other than to

† For, though Mr. B. virtually allows, that sprinkling is Baptism ; yet he pleads for admitting Pædobaptists into the church, upon a supposition of their being *mistaken* in Baptism.

conclude, that those things which are altogether indifferent, and those which are not so, merit an equal regard. Apparent inconsistencies these, of which the reader will judge.

Nor does what Mr. B. advance, respecting our Lord's bearing with the weakneses of his people, evince the propriety of free communion. For, whatever may be intended by those expressions of the great Redeemer's tenderness and care, we cannot help thinking, that they mean something very different from giving his ministers and churches a commission to lay aside a positive ordinance of his; of which Baptists are guilty, when they receive Pædobaptists to communion with them at the Lord's table. Baptism, by immersion, is the only way into the church, that is pointed out in the word of God; nor can any person enter into a church, without the consent of its members. Consequently, when they are unanimous in admitting a person to fellowship with them at the Lord's table, who refuseth to approach it as the word of God directs (which is the case with Pædobaptists) that person receives a commission from the church to omit a positive duty required by the word of God: which, in other words, is no other than a commission to live in a sin of omission. How opposite, then, to that candour, charity, and benevolence, which Mr. B. so warmly recommends, is his own conduct, in charging us, with driving away, scattering the flock, and destroying the peace of our brethren, merely because we do not countenance such a neglect of duty, and such a sin of omission! To promote the peace and edification of christians, and to bear with their infirmities, as the scripture directs, is, we acknowledge, both just and laudable: but to receive a person into the church, contrary to the direction of Christ, under a pretence of promoting his peace and edification, and of bearing his infirmities; is nothing short of doing evil that good may come. And shall we be guilty of such an abuse of divine grace? God forbid!

“ XI. The apostolic practice was, to allow liberty of
 “ conscience, and to exercise great forbearance towards
 “ brethren, who, through weakness and education prin-
 “ ciples, were mistaken in things of as great moment as
 “ the *outward mode* of water-baptism; not refusing fellow-
 “ ship with those who were zealously attached to some of
 “ the abolished rites of the ceremonial law, and the cus-
 “ toms of the elders, particularly circumcision, the Jew-
 “ ish sabbath and fasts, meats and drinks, and divers
 “ washings and also purification in the temple for the vow
 “ of the Nazarite.”

“ Yea, the great apostle Paul circumcised Timothy,
 “ took upon him the Nazarite’s vow, shaved his head at
 “ Cenchrea, and also says, Unto the Jews I became as a
 “ Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are un-
 “ der the law, as under the law, that I might gain them
 “ that are under the law: to them that are without law,
 “ as without law, (being not without law to God, but
 “ under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that
 “ are without the law: to the weak became I as weak,
 “ that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to
 “ all men, that I might by all means save some. The
 “ main concern of the apostle was, to gain souls to the
 “ saving knowledge of Christ; without which all outward
 “ forms will be of no avail. Things indifferent were in-
 “ different to him. Thus should it be with all the minis-
 “ ters of Christ; promoting love and unity among all
 “ saints, though of different sentiments about some mere
 “ outward forms.”

And must Baptism, which is an appointment of our
 sovereign Lord, and an important branch of solemn wor-
 ship, be considered and treated as a MERE *outward form*?
 What thinkest thou, reader? Is this the language of a
 professed BAPTIST, or of a QUAKER *incog*? I do not
 recollect that a more degrading expression, relating to Bap-

tism, is any where used by BARCLAY.—The reader may also observe, that Mr. B. speaks of the “*outward mode of water-baptism* ;” and by this very singular phrase insinuates, that the mode of Baptism may be entirely changed, yet the ordinance continue the same, as to its essence. But can the essence of that institution be distinguished and separated from the mode of administration appointed by Jesus Christ? Or, can any thing be considered as *Christian* Baptism, besides that which *Christ* appointed? If it may, Mr. B. would do well to inform us, in how many “*outward modes*” the appointment may be administered, without destroying its essence. Our Author was wont to believe and assert, that Baptism is *immersion* in the name of the Lord. Has he, then, of late discovered, that *perfusion* and *aspersion* are “*outward modes*” of *immersion*? or has he totally renounced his Baptist principles?—As Mr. B. seems fond of the epithet, *outward*, I will venture to repeat it: “*Outward mode of water-baptism.*” Is there, then, an *inward* mode? Common readers are led by our Opponent’s language to conclude, that, in his opinion, there is. Had he but informed us what is the *inward* mode of *water-baptism*, and whether the *internal* mode of administration be in his judgment, as various as the *outward*; we should have been greatly obliged to him, and he would certainly have had our thanks.

What our Author produces, in defence of his favourite hypothesis, from the conduct of Paul, is far from being so much to his purpose as he seems to imagine. For, in regard to that apostle taking upon him the Nazarite’s vow, there is reason to query, Whether, in so doing, he acted by the authority of God, and under the direction of the Holy Ghost? That it was by the advice of the elders and brethren, then at Jerusalem, he took upon him the vow, is evident; and that the advice of his christian brethren proceeded on a supposition, that such a compliance with

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ancient rites would conciliate the minds of those Jews who were superstitiously attached to the ceremonial law, remove the prejudices they had conceived against him, and obviate future objections to his ministry, is equally clear. The advice, however, and the apostle's conduct upon it, did not produce the desired and expected effect. For when the Jews, from distant parts, came to Jerusalem, and saw the apostle in the temple, they stirred up the people, crying out, *Men of Israel help. This is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place : and all the city was moved, and the people ran together, and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple, and went about to kill him.* Now, such being the design, and such the issue, of the apostle taking the vow upon him, may it not be justly questioned, whether, in that particular, he acted under the direction of the Holy Spirit? Or, can we suppose, without impeaching the character of that divine Agent, that he directed Paul to the use of means, with a view to a particular end, which were quite unsuitable and insufficient to obtain the end?—Again : That Paul had taught the Jews to forsake Moses ; that is, to consider the ceremonial law as fulfilled and abrogated by the death of Jesus Christ, was a fact, supported by the best of evidence ; but the expedient proposed, by his brethren at Jerusalem, seems to have been intended to make the Jewish zealots believe that he had done no such thing, and that the report of his having so done was a falsehood. For thus the elders and brethren address, and thus they advise him, Acts xxi. 23, 24. *Do therefore this that we say unto thee. We have four men which have a vow on them ; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads ; and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.* Now, to suppose the apostle was directed by the Holy Spirit, to take upon him the Nazarite's vow, with a view to make the Jews believe, that the report of his teaching their brethren to forsake Moses,

and

and the customs was false, if it was really true, is such a reflection upon his wisdom and goodness, as we dare not encourage. Nay, it appears impossible, that the Spirit of God should act such a part; it being inconsistent with the holiness of his nature, and he cannot deny himself. It was a truth, and for ever will be a truth, that the apostle taught the people to forsake Moses, and the ceremonial rites, before he took upon him the Nazarite's vow. It must, therefore, be incompatible with the perfections of God, either to direct, or to influence the apostle, in using means to make the Jews believe that report to be false which was founded in truth.—If, then, there be reason to think the apostle was not under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in taking upon him the Nazarite's vow, his conduct in that respect cannot afford a warrant for free communion.

But, admitting the great apostle to have acted in this case, as in others, by divine direction; admitting, also, that he aimed at a different end from that which I have supposed, and that he obtained his design by the mean he employed; it will not warrant our Author's practice, except he can make it appear, that he acts under a similar divine inspiration. Besides, though Paul conformed to antiquated rites, yet he knew the origin of those rites was truly divine; that they had subsisted in their full force for many ages; and that the people, whose approbation he sought, considered the laws relating to them as unrepealed. But Mr. B. as a Baptist, cannot believe that infant sprinkling was ever appointed of God. He must look upon it as an invention of men, which has for ages usurped the place of a divine institution, though it never deserved the notice of any one. The two cases, therefore, are far from being equal; and, consequently, to argue from the one to the other, as if they were parallel, cannot be just.—Nor can any thing be gathered to countenance the practice for which Mr. B. contends, from the apostle circumcising Timothy. For we must either conclude, that he acted by a particular divine revelation,

revelation, in circumcising that excellent man, notwithstanding the right was abolished ; or, that his conduct, in other respects, was diametrically opposite to the law of circumcision, when it was in full force. Consequently, nothing can be justly inferred from hence in favour of free communion ; unless the advocates for it can prove, that they have an immediate revelation from heaven for that practice, which it is probable the apostle had to authorize his circumcising of Timothy.—Nor are the following words, *To the Jews I became as a Jew ; to them that are without law, as without law ; to them that are under the law, as under the law ;* any more to our Author's purpose. For if the apostle, in these instances, acted repugnant to the commands of Christ ; either he had a dispensation from God, for that purpose, or he had not. If the former, he was in the way of his duty ; he was an obedient servant : and, consequently, the things with which he dispensed were not of equal importance with Baptism, which is a positive, peremptory, divine command, and in full force. If the latter, which far be it from us to suppose, he acted the part of an imperious lord, in the house of his great Master. And, consequently, if Mr. B. follow such an example, and teaches men so, we must be excused receiving his instructions ; and cannot but think that he may, without any injustice, be ranked amongst those who are called, *least in the kingdom of heaven.*

“ XII. The members of the church at Philippi were of
 “ different sentiments about things not essential to salvation : they had not all attained the same degree of light
 “ and knowledge of divine things ; and yet, must they
 “ walk together in the ordinances of God's house ? Yes :
 “ the apostle says, Nevertheless, whereto we have already
 “ attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the
 “ same thing : and, if in any thing ye be otherwise minded,
 “ God shall reveal even this unto you. As if he had said,
 “ Let not your different sentiments break christian love,
 “ or

“ or hinder you from walking in church fellowship with
 “ each other, so far as ye are agreed ; leaving each other
 “ with God, to reveal the truth of those things in which
 “ you are differently minded : he is the best instructor,
 “ who has led you into the truth ; and your refusal to
 “ walk together in a church state is not the way to en-
 “ lighten your brother into the truth.”

It is more easy to assert, than to prove, “ that the mem-
 “ bers of the church at Philippi, were of different sentiments
 “ about things not essential to salvation :” and that it was their
 duty to walk together in the ordinances of God’s house,
 notwithstanding this difference of sentiment. Phil. iii.
 15, 16, to which Mr. B. refers, and on which his assertion
 is founded, by no means proves what he intends. The
 apostle, after expressing his love to Jesus Christ in the most
 emphatical terms, and declaring that he was continually
 pressing after that state of perfection which the saints in
 heaven enjoy ; proceeds to exhort his christian brethren
 to steadfastness in the pursuit of the knowledge of Christ,
 and complete happiness through him. *Let us, therefore,*
says the apostle, as many as be perfect, be thus minded ; and if
in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this
unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let
us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

It is worthy of notice, that the apostle does not assert,
 nor even insinuate, that the members of the church at Phi-
 lippi were of different sentiments about any one article in
 religion, neither in this chapter, nor in any other part of
 this epistle. And that circumstance which Mr. B. has al-
 ledged in proof of what he advances, is quite insuf-
 ficient for that purpose. If the apostle had said, And
 though, in some things, ye are otherwise minded ; his as-
 sertions would have been just : but he makes use of the
 hypothetical particle, *if* ; and only informs them what
 they might expect would certainly take place, upon a *sup-*
position

position of their being otherwise minded. *And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, (though God shall reveal even this unto you, upon a supposition of your being otherwise minded) whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* If, therefore, Mr. B. have no better authority than that which he has produced, to support his assertion respecting the members of the Philippian church; he must either conclude, that the apostle considered the members of that church, as of different sentiments about things not essential to salvation, merely because he said, *And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you*; or, he must acknowledge his mistake. If the latter, he gives up the argument. If the former, he might as well conclude that I am assured he is convinced, that the unmeaning arguments which he has sent into the world, to evince the propriety of free communion, are so many enemies to the church of Christ; because I have said, *If ever he is convinced of this, he will cheerfully submit to have them committed to the flames.*

“ XIII. The human mind is not to be forced into truth
 “ by rigour, but led into it by free enquiry and rational
 “ inward conviction: and the exercise of christian love
 “ and forbearance is the most likely means of softening
 “ the minds of mistaken brethren, of dissipating their pre-
 “ judices, of putting them upon a free and impartial en-
 “ quiry after the truth, and rendering them more suscep-
 “ tible of it. A rigid, censorious, uncharitable spirit to-
 “ wards brethren, is contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and
 “ to shut and bar the door against a brother is a strange
 “ way of testifying our love to him, or of convincing him
 “ of his mistake.”

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Mr. B. will do well to remember, that when Baptists shut and bar the door against Pædobaptists*, as he is pleased to term their refusing to admit them into the church; their first object is, to testify their love to Christ, and their veneration for him, as the only Lord and Lawgiver of his church: for they think it a strange way of discovering their love to Christ and reverence for his authority, to prefer the peace and approbation of their fellow mortals, to the glory of Him whose throne is in Jerusalem. And, however strange such a conduct may seem, it cannot be more surprising, than for Mr. B. to plead, with a view to justify free communion; (if he believes that infant sprinkling is Baptism) that the exercise of christian love and forbearance, is the most likely way to soften the minds of mistaken brethren, and to remove their prejudices. For, if sprinkling be Baptism, where is the propriety of calling Pædobaptists *mistaken* brethren, and of admitting them into the church, with a view to dissipate their prejudices? seeing, on that supposition, they are not under any mistake, in regard to Baptism. It is notorious, however, that Baptists, whatever they may pretend, do not admit Pædobaptists into the church, with a view to put them upon a free and impartial enquiry, respecting this branch of divine worship. So far from it, that they give them a commission to consider and treat Baptism by immersion, as an indifferent

* The ungenerous reflections our Author so frequently throws on the *strict* Baptists, for shutting and barring the doors of the church against their Pædobaptist brethren, are entirely without foundation. They prove, however, either, that he was very inattentive to what he advanced; or, that he was influenced by the strongest prejudices. For the business of shutting and barring the doors of the church, does not properly belong to the members of it; their only province being to open them. For the doors of the church are so contrived by infinite wisdom, as always to shut of their own accord, when the laws and ordinances of Christ are regularly obeyed. The contemporaries of Noah, seeking for shelter in the ark, when pursued by the overwhelming flood, and finding the door shut against them, might, on similar grounds, have exclaimed against his want of affection and of compassion. For as, not Noah, but God himself, shut the door of the ark; so CHRIST, and not we, constituted Baptism, *real* Baptism, a term of communion at the holy table.

thing;

thing ; and to conclude, that christians may lawfully live in the neglect of it all their days. It would, indeed, be strange for Baptists to insinuate, that a submission to Baptism by immersion is required of Pædobaptists, after they have encouraged them to believe, that sprinkling is a proper succedaneum for it. And, lest this should be the case, when it becomes the theme of conversation in their societies, it is spoken of with great coolness and indifference ; as if it were appointed only to subserve the humours of men, and that they might regard, or disregard it, just as they please. And that Baptism should be treated in this indifferent manner, in those churches that practise free communion, is absolutely necessary in order to preserve peace. For it is impossible that Pædobaptists should hear immersion spoken of, as essential to that ordinance, without being displeased : unless we could suppose them capable of hearing that which they believe to be an ordinance of Christ, entirely made void, without the least concern ; which supposition is incompatible with evangelical seriousness, zeal for the honour of Christ, and love to the truths of the everlasting gospel. Consequently, this argument of Mr. B. is futile and vain.

“ XIV. There is a vast difference between a person who
“ disbelieves and rejects Water-Baptism as an ordinance of
“ Christ, and one who believes and is found in it, as he
“ really understands it. Nor can it be the duty of any
“ one to submit to a different mode, unless he is persuaded,
“ in his own mind, that the mode he has already submitted
“ to was wrong. For Baptism is the answer of a good
“ conscience towards God, and blind obedience is neither
“ required or acceptable to him. And as a mistaken defect
“ in one duty, will not exempt brethren from being found
“ in other important duties, which they have light into,
“ and which are privileges for their edification, neither will
“ it justify any in debarring them from being found in the
“ social duty and privilege of the Lord’s Supper.”

Admitting the difference between the two cases, to which our Author refers, to be ever so great, the consequence which he infers is by no means valid; for if it were, he who submits to Baptism, according to his own views of the ordinance, must have a right of communion, how foolish or absurd soever his notions of Baptism may be. Suppose a person, for instance, instead of being *immersed* on a profession of faith, which Mr. B. considers as the appointment of Christ; or, of having a little water *sprinkled on his face*, which is now the general practice, in these kingdoms; to have a mixture of oil and water *poured on his head*, without mentioning the adorable name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, (as practised by some ancient heretics †) and that he considers it as real Baptism; according to this argument, he must be considered and treated as a *baptized* person.

When Mr. B. asserts, "That it cannot be the duty of any one to submit to a different mode, unless he is persuaded in his own mind, that the mode he has already submitted to was wrong;" he falls into a mistake, for want of distinguishing between the christian's *duty*, and his being *convinced* of it. Every branch of duty is contained in the Bible; and, consequently, it must be invariably the same, whatever any one may think of it. Now, to be immersed, on a profession of faith, is the duty of christians in general, independent of their thoughts concerning it. To suppose, therefore, that a believer may, through ignorance, or fear, or prejudice, neglect that which God requires of christians in general, on a presumption that it is not *his* duty, is so palpably wrong, that I can hardly imagine Mr. B. himself will dare to assert it. Duty, especially such instances of it, as relate to positive institutions of divine worship, depends, not on the judgment and will of ignorant and selfish mortals; but on the sovereign mandate of Heaven.

† See Dr. WALL's *Hist. Infant Bap.* Part II. Chap. 5.

The Papists think it their duty to adore the host, the Jews to blaspheme Christ, and the Quakers to reject both Baptism and the holy supper; but is it, in reality, their duty so to do?—Nor are we at liberty to invert the order of positive rites, established by our sovereign Lord; or, to admit any one to communion that is not baptized. No; we are bound by the highest authority, *to keep the ordinances as they were appointed.*

“ XV. Believing Pædobaptists have the same spiritual
 “ views of the ordinance of Water-Baptism, and look
 “ upon themselves as under the same solemn engagements
 “ in their submission to it, in their mode, as the Baptists do
 “ in theirs: so that there is an agreement in the substance,
 “ though not in the external mode of it: which difference
 “ ought not to destroy the comforts of love, the fellowship
 “ of the spirit, and the bowels and mercies which the chil-
 “ dren of God, as his elect, holy and beloved, should put
 “ on and exercise towards each other.”

That “ believing Pædobaptists have *the same* spiritual
 “ views of the ordinance of Water Baptism,” as the Baptists
 have, may, notwithstanding Mr. B’s assertion, be justly que-
 ried. For the *latter* believe, that Baptism was designed to re-
 present, in a figure, the death, burial, and resurrection of a
 body. The believer, by going down into the water, prac-
 tically professes to die unto sin; and, when immersed in it,
 he is, as it were, buried: in which burial (as a person literally
 dead and buried is no more, with respect to his former con-
 nexions, pursuits, and enjoyments) he solemnly professes
 that he is no more, considered as a lover of sin, or as a
 companion of those who serve sin. And in his emersion, a
 resurrection to newness of life is represented in a figure;
 and he declares himself ready to *follow the Lamb whither-
 soever he goeth.*—But how,—I appeal to Mr. B. himself—
 how should Pædobaptists have *the same* spiritual views of the
 ordinance, in their mode of proceeding, when it is not
 adapted

adapted to represent any such things? As to infants, they have no spiritual views at all, when they are sprinkled. And as for adults, to whom water is applied by aspersion, in what part of the service is there any thing like the representation of a person being dead, buried, and rising again? In what part of the ceremony would a sensible spectator judge, from any circumstances in which the subject is either active or passive, that he intends those who are present should view him, as professing to die to sin; to be buried, as to his former sinful courses; and to rise again to newness of life? Whether the person sprinkled, stand, or kneel, or sit, a spectator cannot rationally conclude that he intends, by the position in which he is, to express his dying to sin, and his being buried, as to his former evil course of life.

Should it be said, The candidate for Baptism may be so placed as to represent a corpse, before he is sprinkled; and then the circumstances of lying down, and rising up again, are sufficient to represent the death and resurrection of a body. We answer, persons who are literally dead and buried, are laid in the bowels of the earth; and those who are literally raised again, are raised up out of their graves. Now, as Baptism is designed to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of a body; something more must be required, than barely lying down, and rising up again. For though it were all owed, that lying down and rising again, are sufficient to exhibit a figurative death, and a figurative resurrection; yet the body is never so circumstanced in any one part of the service, as properly to exhibit a figurative *burial*: for, in order to that, it must, for a while, disappear. Now, if a death, a burial, and a resurrection, cannot be properly represented by sprinkling; and yet Pædobaptists have the same spiritual views of Water Baptism, in their mode, as Baptists have; then it will follow, that they have ideas of things which are not in the least represented in their mode; unless, by a figure, we may understand that which bears *no resemblance* to the thing represented.

That

That adult Pædobaptists may have the same ideas existing in their minds, when they are sprinkled, as Baptists have when they are immersed, is not to be doubted; but then those ideas were not suggested to them, by casting a little water on one part of the body only. Until those ideas, however, are naturally suggested to them by sprinkling, which it is absurd to suppose; we are under a necessity of believing, that Mr. B. is mistaken on this head.

XVI. "Believing Pædobaptists walk as honourably in the world towards those who are without, and also in the church, and are as capable of, and as strict in, discharging the sacred duties, respecting the table of the Lord, as the Baptists; such as examining of themselves, and so eating of that bread and drinking of that cup, discerning the Lord's body, doing it in remembrance of him; shewing the Lord's death till he come; and, though many in number, yet partaking of that one bread, as one bread and one body. So that it is unjustifiable to deny them what is the common privilege of the children of God, the supper of the Lord."

Far be it from me to impeach, either the moral, or the religious character of godly Pædobaptists: and equally far ought our Author to be from supposing, that he may receive to communion one or another, in any way that our sovereign Lord has not appointed. For, either immersion, on a profession of faith, is essential to Baptism, or it is not. If the latter, why does not our Author sprinkle infants? And why does he immerse any that have been sprinkled in their infancy? If the former, then Pædobaptists are unbaptized, however excellent their character in other respects may be: and, consequently, to admit them to the sacred supper, is a practical rejection of Baptism; and on the same principle that he rejects *one* positive ordinance, he may reject *both*.

XVII. "If Baptism by immersion had been essentially necessary for constituting a true church of Christ, or for the admission of members into it; or a different mode a sufficient

“ sufficient bar to keep a person out of it, and from his
 “ table; we might suppose that some of the epistles, to the
 “ primitive churches of Christ, would have been at least
 “ inscribed, to the baptized church of Christ: and also
 “ that the apostles, in giving the characters of the members
 “ of the same churches, would sometimes have called them
 “ baptized believers or brethren, as well as the beloved of
 “ God, the called of Jesus Christ, the sanctified in Christ
 “ Jesus, and the saints and faithful brethren in Christ: but
 “ as they are not, surely those persons, who answer the cha-
 “ racters given the members of the pure apostolic churches,
 “ are fit to be received into any of the churches of Christ
 “ in our days; and their being baptized in a different mode,
 “ as it is the only bar raised against their admittance, ought
 “ to be removed away.”

This argument labours under one little inconvenience; that is, it proves *too much*, if it prove any thing at all. For might not a Quaker retort; If Baptism had been intended by Jesus Christ, for the use of his disciples in succeeding ages, is it not reasonable to suppose, that some of the many Epistles, directed to the primitive churches, would have been inscribed, *To the BAPTIZED church of Christ?* But as none of those inspired letters were so addressed, it is rational to conclude, that Baptism was never designed to be a standing ordinance in the christian church. And if what is called, *the Lord's Supper*, had been designed as a permanent institution in the church, might it not be presumed, that one or another of the Epistles would have been inscribed, *To the church of Christ, holding communion at THE LORD'S TABLE?* As, therefore, we find no such address, we may safely conclude, that neither Baptism, nor the Supper, about the latter of which friend B. makes such a stir, was ever intended of God to be regarded by us.—Nay, this argument, if it be worthy of the name, might as well be adduced to prove, that there was neither preaching, nor prayer, nor praise, in the primitive churches, nor ought to be any now. For none of the Epistles are inscribed, *To the church*
 of

of Christ in which the gospel is *preached*; or, in which *prayer* is made; or, in which *praise* is addressed to God. If, therefore, Mr. B. will abide by the consequences of this argument, he may improve on Quakerism itself, and have none but *silent meetings*.

XVIII. "Supposing the mode of immersion to be right, yet your adopting that unscriptural party-name and distinction, of *the baptized churches of Christ*, and refusing fellowship with all who do not practise the same, is the ready way to let your good be evil spoken of; as it gives great reason for people to think, you lay too great stress on Baptism by immersion: and also it favours too much of a bigoted party-spirit, which is unfriendly to the life and power of godliness. It is certainly one of the most subtle and successful wiles of Satan, as an angel of light, that he might break brotherly love and unity, and smother vital godliness among the children of God; to set them at variance about the outward forms of godliness, under the specious pretence of a zeal for God, till they become mere party-bigots to an empty name. As all party-names and distinctions, of human device, tend to divide the churches and children of God, they ought not to be retained; as they are all but one body, and should have fellowship one with another."

If, according to Mr. B's supposition, immersion is the right mode of Baptism; then though that distinguishing character, "*The baptized churches of Christ*," is not to be found in the word of God syllabically; yet those churches of Christ which have been baptized, as the scripture directs, are, by a necessary consequence, *the BAPTIZED churches of Christ*, and there cannot be any impropriety in their being so called; unless it be improper to call persons and things what they really are. Consequently, though we have no objection to expunge from the church all party-names and distinctions of human device (for those only can be called party names, which are founded in the imaginations of men)

yet that distinguishing character, "The baptized churches of Christ," may be justly retained; because it is really founded in the word of God.—Nor is it an objection of any weight, against retaining this distinguishing character, for Mr. B. to say; "Your adopting that unscriptural party-name and distinction, and refusing fellowship with all who do not practise the same, is the ready way to let your good be evil spoken of; as it gives great reason for people to think, you lay too great stress on Baptism by immersion." For, to make the objection forcible, Mr. B. must prove, either that Baptists have no authority to discover an inflexible attachment to an ordinance of Christ; or that the manner in which they discover their attachment is improper; neither of which will be easy for him to do. We challenge Mr. B. however, to make it appear (and beg leave to observe, that his *Ipse dixit* is not sufficient) that Baptists, in adopting the distinguishing character, of which he speaks, and in refusing to commune with Pædobaptists at the Lord's table; are either destitute of authority for their conduct, or influenced by any other motives than a well regulated affection for Christ, and a due concern for his honour, as their Lord and lawgiver.—Nor do we give any just cause of suspicion, that we lay too great a stress upon Baptism. That we consider it as a term of communion at the Lord's table, is freely acknowledged; and so have christians in general, of every name, in every country, and in every age. Yes, its necessity in that respect, has been almost universally maintained. Did we consider the aspersions of infants as real Baptism, we should make no scruple to admit Pædobaptist believers into communion with us: for their being, on our principles, *unbaptized*, is the ground, the only ground, on which we refuse to have communion with them in the holy supper.

That Satan endeavours to set Christians at variance, about the outward forms of godliness, to smother vital religion, and to break brotherly love and unity, we readily grant. But what then? must we discard that form of worship
which

which God has appointed? far be it! Mr. B. might as well say, 'As the Devil takes occasion to puff Christians up with pride, when they enjoy liberty in discharging the duty of prayer; it is the wisest and the safest way for them to omit the solemn exercise. Baptism by immersion is a form of worship prescribed by Almighty God; and, therefore, whatever consequences may follow our attending to that duty according to the divine rule, we cannot depart from it and be guiltless.

XIX. "The laws of separation and exclusion from God's house and table, according to the sacred oracles of truth, extend to the world; to such as consent not to the doctrine which is according to godliness; to those who are destitute of the truth; to the contentious; to the profane and disorderly walkers; and to the heretic. Amongst whom we cannot rank sincere, humble and honourable believers, who walk conscientiously according to the light God has given them, though their sentiments are different about Baptism. Against such there is no law, nor ought any church or minister to make any."

That there is no law finally to condemn the servants of Christ, and that churches and ministers have no right to make laws, to bind Christians, in any one instance whatever, are indubitable truths. And it is no less certain, that a person should not only be free from those things which are characteristics of wicked men, and of disorderly brethren; but that he also should be possessed of those qualifications which evince his right of communion at the Lord's table, before he can be lawfully admitted into the house of God: among which, a willingness to approach the holy supper, according to the directions given in the sacred oracles, is absolutely necessary. Now, respecting the way in which Christians should approach the Lord's table, we must conclude, either that God has given sufficient directions in his word, or that he has not. If the latter, we are left in the dark, on this head; and, consequently, every man

is at liberty to approach the Lord's table, in such a way as his inclinations lead: for one man, without a guide, is as likely to be right, in religious matters, as another. It is meet therefore, if we have no certain rule to direct us in this respect, that every man should act as seemeth right in his own eyes. But if the Lord has not given sufficient directions in his word, respecting the way to his table; that omission must be a source of contention in the church. For it is too evident, that the sentiments of Christians differ widely on this head; nor can this evil be cured, by any thing short of a divine rule. *God, however, is not the author of confusion, but of peace, in all the churches of the saints; and, consequently, he has not left this matter undetermined in his word.*

In proof of the point, I appeal to Acts ii. 41, 42. *Then they that gladly received his word, WERE BAPTIZED: and the same day there were ADDED UNTO THEM, about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* It seems unreasonable to wish for a more explicit precedent, than that which is contained in these words. For they set before us, with all imaginable perspicuity, the order in which the apostles proceeded, under the influence of the Spirit, in admitting members into the primitive churches. And if the conduct of the apostles is to be considered as a precedent for us; if it is our duty to follow them, in all things practicable by us, as they followed Christ, and acted under the influence of the holy Ghost; it must be our duty to follow them in *this* instance; an instance from which it is plain, that the way to the Lord's table was through the water, in the apostolic times. Nor can Christians lawfully approach it in *any other* way, if the word of God is to be our guide.

XX. "Lastly, all the saints and faithful in Christ, both
 "Baptists and Pædobaptists, belong to the general assembly
 "and church of the first born, which are written in heaven
 "in

“ in the Lamb’s book of life; and, as fellow-citizens of
 “ Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly
 “ Jerusalem, they will all have entrance ministered unto
 “ them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord
 “ and Saviour Jesus Christ, where they will spend a bliss-
 “ ful eternity together, in the enjoyment of all the glories
 “ thereof, and join in concert in singing, in the height of
 “ Zion, the high praises of God and the Lamb: the amaz-
 “ ing rapturous thoughts of which should unite all the
 “ saints here in love to, and fellowship with each other, in
 “ the house of God and at his table.”

That all the Saints and faithful in Christ, belong to the general assembly and church of the first born; that they will spend a blissful eternity together, in the enjoyment of all the glories of the heavenly world, and join in singing the high praises of God and the Lamb, we readily grant. Yes, true believers of *all* denominations, whether they be Protestants, Papists, or members of the Greek church; whether they be Baptists, Pædobaptists, or Katabaptists; shall all be happy together in the enjoyment of that sublime blessedness. But are we at liberty hence to conclude, that they may all unite at the Lord’s table? What, must we receive to communion converted Catholics, who refuse the *wine* at the holy supper; and converted Quakers, who utterly reject *baptism*, because we hope to enjoy eternal happiness with them in the heavenly world! Moses and the ancient prophets, no doubt, hoped to enjoy an everlasting state of blessedness with many that were not circumcised; but were they warranted, by the rapturous thoughts of that consummate happiness, to admit any males to communion with them, in the Jewish passover or the sanctuary service, before they were circumcised? Mr. B. should remember, that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are *positive* appointments—as much of a *positive kind*, as the ordinances of circumcision and the passover, under the ancient œconomy: and that Christians are no less obliged to regard the *former*, in the manner and order revealed in the New Testament, than the Jews were bound to observe the *latter*, as enjoined in the books of Moses.

Having

Having answered Mr. B's. twenty reasons for free communion, I think it needless to consider the remaining part of his pamphlet; as it contains very little besides the most trifling appeals to the passions. I shall therefore conclude, with expressing my sincere desire, that while our opponents plead for love and forbearance, they may not lose sight of truth and righteousness; and that while they stand forth as the champions of liberty, they may not trample on the laws of Heaven.

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